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Official organ of the Communist Party U.S.A. (Opposition)
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TOWARD COMMUNIST UNITY IN GERMANY

Correspondence between Communist Party of Germany and Communist Party of Germany (Opposition).

To Heinrich Brandler

Dear Comrade:

The Politburo has taken a position on the results of the conference, which you asked for, with our representatives. They are as follows:

1. Though you state both orally and in your documents that you broke Party discipline in 1928, yet you stubbornly insist that this breach was due to abnormal conditions within the Communist Party of Germany or, in other words, was justified. Even today you attempt to justify your past actions by stating that the breach of discipline was a result of tactical differences and not over principles. An attemp to split the Party because of secondary tactical questions is impermissible. All previous attempts to split the proletariat and its Party have been made because of differences in principle. If it is true that there were no differences over principles, then, the breach of discipline is all the more indicting.

2. The report of the negotiations and your communications to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany clearly indicate that all the old principle differences--on the role of the Social Democracy, on the revolutionary role of the Communist Party of Germany, etc., --exist as heretofore. In adhering to all your former views which deviate from the Party line, you are proving that principle differences continue to exist. The struggle you are waging against Communism, against the Communist Party, (and those who are fighting the Communist Party of Germany are fighting Communism, aiding, even though unconsciously, fascism) is based on these fundamental differences. In addition to the old principle differences you have now developed a difference with the C. P. G. on the national question. We refer to your opposition to our slogan for the status quo, though you are forced to admit that this slogan alone will defeat Hitler in the Saar Basin.

3. These are the real reasons why you suddenly declared at the conference that a statement of capitulation was out of the question, though our representatives did not demand such and were merely interested in trying to convince you ofyour untenable political views.

You very clearly expressed the view that you refused to submit to the inner discipline of our Party which every member, be it rank and filer or the highest functionary, observes, and that you look upon democratic centralism in our Party as a license for group and factional fights which are destructive for any party. The very fact that you ask for a detailed discussion on the entire policy of the past and future of the C. P. G., though you refuse to retract any attacks on the past policy of the C. P. G., proves how far removed you are from a sincere return to the only Party of the revolutionary proletariat because of principle differences. Your former followers, on the other hand, who, misled by you, left the Party, are gradually coming back. The Politburo of the C. P. G. is convinced that not all your followers are of your opinion, as the return of a number of

your members to the Party illustrates. The C. P. G. will, therefore, make all efforts to win back all of your former followers to the only Party of the successful proletarian revolution.

The Politburo of the Communist Party of Germany confirms the statements made by our representatives that the Communist Party of Germany, in its struggle for the establishment of the unity of the working class, will approach all your few groups still existing in Germany in regard to the establishment of joint activities for the struggle against fascism on the basis of joint demands.

Furthermore, we wish to emphasize again, that the groups in Germany still under your influence and the Social-Democratic comrades should jointly build illegal trade unions with us; should help to build up the good beginnings made by the Red Trade Union Center, the Red trade unions and the independent trade union functionaries. The Red Trade Union Center and the Red unions which continue to embody the class traditions of the German trade union movement under the most difficult conditions of illegality and who defiantly uphold the banner of free trade unions, are ready to merge their organizations which have a tradition in the German working class, into these united trade unions in the interest of a unified trade union movement. You are aware, of course, that this cannot take place without the influence of the Communist Party in Germany.

And since you yourself state both orally and in your documents that you are firmly convinced that our united front proposals to all anti-fascist workers and working class groups within Germany are sincere--that these proposals are not maneuvers due to a turn in the foreign policy of the Soviet Union, as the Prague Social-Democratic party leadership maintains--we ask you to instruct your followers in Germany to help form a unified trade union movement with the aid of our comrades in the interest of the proletariat for the joint overthrow of Hitler.

As far as the establishment of united trade unions, as far as the problems of future joint activities and problems of the united trade union movement are concerned, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany, (in the spirit of a comradely discussion to the extent to which this is possible) is at all times ready to come to an agreement with all existing working class groups in the country which are willing to lead the struggle against fascism.

September 18, 1934.

FOR COMMUNIST UNITY IN GERMANY

(A Declaration by the Communist Party of Germany (Opposition)

To the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany:

Dear Comrades:

The Foreign Committee of the national leadership of the Communist Party of Germany (Opposition) herewith acknowledges the receipt of your letter of the 18th which we received on the 24th. We welcome the fact that the Politburo confirms the agreement reached by the representatives of both sides to cooperate in the organization of united activities and the building of illegal class trade unions. This is a big step forward and fulfills a demand which the Communist Party of Germany (Opposition) has always put forward.

We regret, however, that on the question of the re-establishment of organizational unity of the Communist movement in Germany, thru the unity of the Communist Party of Germany and the Communist Party of Germany (Opposition), you create artificial obstacles and are, in this way, putting off unity.

You maintain that, on the basis of our previous letter to you and the oral negotiations, "all old principle differences on the role of the Social Democracy, on the revolutionary role of the C. P. G., etc., continue to exist as before" and that in addition there exists now a principle difference on the national question brought to light by the Saar problem. You imply that as far as you are concerned the question of unity of the C. P. G. and the C. P. G.-O. depends on the publication of a statement, on our part, to the effect that the C. P. G. -O. has stood for basically false, non-communist views and has now given these up.

You do not give any reasons for your assertions. You cannot give them because there aren't any.

Some Basic Facts

Let us briefly state the essential facts:

The C. P. G. -O. stands for the principles and aims of communism; it accepts the program of the Communist International. It makes this acceptance the necessary prerequisite for membership in its organization. The platform of the C. P. G. -O. and its consistent position against those who have violated these fundamentals will convince anyone that this is so. The struggle which the C. P. G. -O. has waged on the basis of Communist principles as a tendency, involved mainly the following basic tactical questions of great importance in everyday political activities:

1. United Front Tactics:

We have been demanding real united front tactics which require the C. P. to turn to reformist and other working class organizations, i.e., to the members and the leaders (systematically, consistently and not accidentally and under exceptional circumstances) for joint actions for certain

immediate demands and revolutionary transition slogans. We have done so because the linking up of Communist propaganda with the experience of the masses is the only means with which to win the majority of the working class for the aims and principles of communism.

2. Trade Union Tactics:

We have been in opposition to the red trade union policy; we were opposed to the attempt of building dual unions where independent mass organizations already existed. We demanded, before Hitler's seizure of power, that the policy of winning over the reformist unions be continued. Following the establishment of the fascist dictatorship we advocated the formation of illegal class trade unions.

3. We have been demanding inner-Party democracy on the basis of democratic centralism. We demanded actual participation of all Party members in the working out, execution, control and criticism of the policies of the Party; the right of the members to choose, control and criticize their functionaries.

That has been the basic content of our tactical fight.

What is the content of the tactical turn of the C. I. which has been initiated in France, Germany, Austria and other countries?

1. The resumption of united front tactics in the above mentioned sense.

2. The liquidation of the Red trade union tactics and the Red unions, the slogan of the formation of united illegal class unions in Germany, the re-establishment of trade union unity in Poland, France, etc.

3. A beginning towards the establishment of inner-Party democracy which manifests itself in the fact that there will be a wide discussion preceding the Seventh Congress of the C. I., and, further, in the draft resolution of the C. P. of Austria, the question of "inner-Party democracy" is presented essentially as we represent it.

The Saar Question

As for the Saar question: after the establishment of the fascist dictatorship in Germany we demanded that the slogan "Back to Germany" be abandoned and that the slogan "For a Soviet Saar" (in Soviet Germany or Soviet France). The C. P. of the Saar basin kept the slogan of the return to Germany until December 1933, tho it had become ridiculous by then. It subsequently adopted the slogan of a Soviet Saar and finally entered into a united front with the S. P. of the Saar basin on the basis of the Social-Democratic slogan for the status quo. If the slogan for a Soviet Saar is in contradiction to a fundamentally basic Communist position on the national question then you are just as guilty of this deviation. Tho we differ on the question of voting for the status quo, we agreed not to bring up the question publicly while the united front lasted, leaving the discussion until after the united front activities for inner-Party settlement. It is not true that we admit that the slogan of maintaining the status quo alone can defeat Hitler in the Saar. We have, on the contrary, insisted that only an extra-parliamentary struggle can defeat Hitler. We point particularly to Danzig where the League of Nations

regime proved no obstacle to the establishment of fascist rule.

Against Capitulation

What do these facts prove?

They prove that no one can deny and that no maneuver can hide the fact that the tactical turn, now being completed is essentially along the strategical lines for which the Communist Party of Germany (Opposition) and the International Communist Opposition have fought for years.

If, therefore, you demand outright, or demand by implication, that we denounce our position as non-Communist you are denouncing your own present tactics as non-Communist. Or, are these views to be denounced as non-Communist because we stood for them and fought for them outside the Party? Or, because today you brand these views sectarian, the very same views which we called the ultra-left course? Or, was the line which you recognize today as Communist a non-Communist line up to now? For example, was the slogan for the formation of illegal class trade unions false a year ago? Would it have been wrong for the Communist Party of Germany to have used the united front tacts towards the Socialist Party of Germany before Hitler's seizure of power as they have been used by the Communist Party of France since February 6th, 1934 in its approach to the Socialist Party of France?

Is it not ridiculous for you to expect the Communist Party of Germany (Opposition) to denounce in words as non-Communist those tactical views which you are actually carrying out at present and to expect the C. P. G.-O. to endorse those tactical views which you are rejecting today as sectarian?

This is what we mean by a "statement of capitulation" which we rejected and are now rejecting, if only because it is ridiculous and unbelievable. What other reason could there be for such a statement than the desire to make the C. P. G.-O. furnish evidence that the present tactical turn is no turn at all? How could such a statement be taken seriously in view of the facts, in view of the following statement as that by Lenski of the Communist Party of Poland; "There is at present a fundamental turn in the activities of the Party." (Rundschau, No. 53). The authority of the Party leadership would be weakened by such a statement. Above all, however, an open, clear presentation and not a concealment of the turn is necessary in the interest of the Party, in the interest of its inner unity as well as in the interest of its activities. We are convinced that the great mass of Party members rejects such nonsense.

On the other hand, we have stated and state now that we are ready to do all that is actually necessary in order to bring about and assure the re-establishment of the unity of the Communist movement in Germany as rapidly as possible.

What We Are Ready to Do For Unity

We are ready to do the following:

1. To carry out all the decisions of the Communist Party of Germany and the Communist International in a disciplined fashion.

2. To accept all those decisions which aim at the liquidation of the ultra-left course.

3. To dissolve the Communist Party of Germany (Opposition) as a fraction after unity with the Communist Party of Germany.

4. We demand no special, factional privileges in the C. P. G. and the C. I.; we merely demand inner-Party democracy for all Party members.

Our concrete coneption of inner-Party democracy is exactly the same as that contained in the draft resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Austria to the Party convention. It follows:

> "The Party must be built on the principle of democratic centralism, on the basis of inner-Party democracy and strict centralised leadership and self-imposed iron discipline. Inner-Party democracy means that no Party member can adopt passive attitude in the Party but must be actively engaged in carrying out the work assigned to him by his unit. Furthermore, he must report his experiences and opinions to the Party and must actively participate in the working out of tactics and the Party line. Inner-Party democracy means self-criticism, i.e., an unceasing, vital testing of the correctness of the Party line, a ruthless exposition of the weaknesses and inadequacies of each and every Party organ, a systematic check up on adopted resolutions. Inner-Party democracy assures each Party member a great deal of initiative in the application of general Party directives and enables him to respond to specific situations. Inner-Party democracy means finally the most active participation of the entire membership in the selection and building up of leading Party cadres and providing for the demotion of those who have shown themselves to be incapable and their substitution by more capable comrades."

It is understood that inner-Party democracy is not limited to the basic Party units but to every section of the organization from the lowest to the highest, including the Party press.

On the question of discipline we would like to add the following: Every case of a breach of discipline in a Communist Party is to be regretted. The responsibility for the breach in 1928, which was inevitable, rests not on us, but on the leaders of the Communist Party who were then in power and who have likewise been responsible for the tactical

errors and their serious consequences for the Party and the working class. We, the old leaders of the C. P. G. and the C.P.G.-O., have helped to lend real meaning to discipline. We have demonstrated in action by the C.P.G.-O. that discipline in a Communist tendency, which is a cadre organization, must be even more strict than in a Communist mass party. Our entire membership participated actively in the discussion and working out of all tactical questions. The discipline of our membership has stood the test better than any other proletarian organization including the C. P. G. when the Hitler dictatorship was established.

Historical Role of the C. P. G.-O.

Your statement that former followers of the C. P. G.-O. are now returning to the C. P. G. is obviously too false to deceive anyone. Your announcement that you will make all efforts to win back the followers of the C. P. G.-O. individually does not disturb us in the least. We bring to your attention the fact that, previous to your present instructions for united activities, our comrades and your comrades had already engaged in united activities in a number of places: for example, in Berlin, Breslau, Wuerttemberg, Thuringia, Rhineland-Westphalia. Furthermore, that, previous to your turn, a number of leading functionaries and Party members had accepted the views of the C. P. G.-O. Though you talk of few and small groups of the C. P. G.-O. yet actually the numerical relation between the C. P. G.-O. and the C. P. G. changed after the fascists' seizure of power in favor of the C. P. G.-O.

More than that. The historical achievement and significance of the C. P. G.-O. stand out clearest when one considers that the essential content of its views have been accepted despite all obstacles; and furthermore, that, after the establishment of the fascist dictatorship, all decisive questions of tactics and strategy of the anti-fascist struggle were first worked out and applied by the C.P.G.-O. These facts may be denied by the official Party. But, they exist, nevertheless. The C.P.G.-O. may well be proud of its fulfilled historical achievement as an organized Communist tendency. The attempt to force it to repudiate its own achievements at the very moment when the tactical turn of the C. P. and the C. I. bear eloquent testimony to its correctness and significance is futile.

We repeat: We, the C. P. G.-O., are ready to do everything that is necessary in order to bring about the unity of the C. P. G. and the C. P. G.-O. We do not set any conditions of a factional or personal nature. The obstacles which you are placing in the way of unity in the near future have nothing in common with the real interests of the Communist movement, but are a result of your desire to get belated recognition on paper of the correctness of those tactics which you are now forced to change.

Attitude to the C.P.G.-O.--The Acid Test

We regret this all the more since the significance of Communist unity in Germany for the entire working class is so obvious. This unity will be the proof of the seriousness,

the thoroughness, and the sincerity of the new turn to those Social-Democratic workers who are to be won over to a joint anti-fascist struggle, for the joint formation of illegal class trade unions, and for the principles and aims of Communism. Furthermore, the re-unification of the old cadres of the Communist movement who were intimately connected with the creation and development of the C. P. G. cannot but enhance the appeal of Communism.

We are, therefore, convinced that the mass of Party members in Germany will, together with us, work for the rapid elimination of the artificial and untenable barriers which you have placed in the way of the re-establishment of unity of the Communist movement of Germany and that it will regret and condemn the delay caused by you.

The majority of Party members in Germany will, likewise, find it difficult to understand that, on the one hand, you are willing to negotiate with all anti-fascist groups in Germany and on the other, you are trying to create the belief that in our case it is a question of personal negotiations. It is understood, of course, that the written and oral negotiations are not of a personal nature but take place between representatives of organizations.

We are, of course, ready at any time to continue the discussions on the question of the re-establishment of unity of the Communist movement in Germany. We propose to you as a further step in this direction, to go over with you the arrangements for the discussion you have decided upon for the Seventh World Congress.

As to the question of united activities and trade union work our organizations have already, under our instructions, approached your organizations to discuss joint actions. We, on our part, ask you to name the place and date for a discussion as to the concrete application of our joint actions, i.e., to lay down joint bases for the formation of and activity of illegal class trade unions and a program of action for the preparation and organization of anti-fascist mass actions.

National Committee
Communist Party of Germany
(Opposition)

September 29, 1934

WHITHER SPAIN?

by

A. K. Das Gupta

A most laconic government communique issued from Madrid on the 15th of October says that the fight is still going on in Trubia and in the vicinity of Mieres. This is the eleventh day of the fight of the Asturian miners against a vast modern army operating in conjunction with the navy and the air force. This heroic, single-handed, and self-less fight unto death of the Spanish proletariat will ever remain a source of great inspiration to all those destined to fight the battles that are still to come. The world, that is the world that counts, stands stupefied before this great spectacle of self-effacement of the sooty miner in his attempt to make the world a better place to live in.

The Communist International has issued an appeal to bring practical help to the Spanish revolutionaries and representatives of both Internationals are meeting to find out ways and means of doing it. Demonstrations of solidarity of the world proletariat would greatly hearten the temporarily crest-fallen Spanish worker. Material help for the victims would be an immense service.

As for the present revolution--alas, it already lies drowned in blood. The soldiers of the conqueror of Oviedo, General Ochoa, are busy picking up corpses which according to the over-optimistic martial law censor are "innumerable." The wounded are also being picked up to provide work for the expert firing squads of the Spanish Foreign Legion brought over from Morrocco.

The immediate cause of the present revolt might be said to be the formation of the pro-fascist government in Madrid. The crisis of the Samper government whose resignation led to the formation of the present government, with the collaboration of the CEDA--a party composed of the Monarchist, Catholic and the wealthy agrarian elements--reflected just one of those periods, when the two opposing forces that characterise capitalist states find it necessary to settle accounts outside the parliamentary floor. The incorporation of the CEDA in the new government signified also the consummation of a policy pursued with patience and skill by Gil Robles, the leader of the CEDA. It has always been the aim of the forces of fascism in Spain to seize power by parliamentary means under the guise of republicanism rather than follow the path of adventurism. In the general election of November 1933 the lefts suffered a big defeat and CEDA became the largest single party in the Cortes. CEDA did not immediately demand seats in the government. Gil Robles preferred to mark time till the moment when the gradually sharpening class antagonisms would compel all the different parliamentary groups, excepting those insignificant few representing the working class, to come under his tutelage out of sheer fear of the latter.

This process whereby petty bourgeois parties driven by the fear of mass revolt try to please those who alone are in a position to avert the calamity was clearly seen during the regime of the Radical, Samper. In the brutal repressions of the workers and peasants' unrest that characterized the

whole regime, in the continued declaration of the state of alarm and enforcement of censorship the hand of Gil Robles could easily be felt. Samper's regime was in reality a convenient cover for the CEDA to prepare its parliamentary coup d'etat. On the 1st of October when the Cortes met in its first winter session Gil Robles, who had so long allowed Samper to continue in office, withdrew his confidence and demanded participation in the government. Now, what exactly occasioned this significant change in tactics? The answer is very simple: the revolutionisation of the masses. Things had indeed undergone profound changes in the recent months. The fascists did not think it opportune to continue any more as merely a parliamentary opposition. Unrestricted power was needed, they felt.

Sharpening Class Conflicts.

The widespread general strikes, the peasant strike, the bloody clashes between workers and the monarchists were gathering tempo. The influence wielded by anarcho-syndicalism deterring workers from political action was on the wane, as could be judged from the increasing participation of the workers in political questions. And what is even more eloquent testimony of this, is the big drop from 1,200,000 to about a quarter of this figure in the membership of the C. N. T., the national trade union organization of the anarcho-syndicalists. The enormous increase of strength of the C. G. T., the socialist trade union, the increase of strength of the Communist groups, particularly the workers and peasants' block led by Maurin in Catalonia, of the official Communist party in the north, all showed the same leftward trend. What was most important was the renunciation by the Socialist Party under pressure of the masses, of the time-honored parliamentary methods in favor of armed direct action.

It was common knowledge months before this uprising that swept over the country, and in which the socialists have played such an important part, that huge stocks of arms had been accumulated by the socialists all over Spain. El Socialista, the organ of the S. P. had been frankly admitting the inevitability of an armed conflict, while Renovation, the organ of the Socialist youth, who undoubtedly played the most important role in the revolutionisation of their elders, openly advocated a few days before the actual explosion an armed insurrection for the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Supplies of arms in the homes of socialist deputies and socialist organizations had already aroused suspicion. But the extraordinary big haul of arms from the headquarters of the Socialist organization in Madrid brought things to a head. The dilatory tactics of the CEDA had to give way to active participation in the government with a view to strike at the revolt from a position of vantage.

A re-election at this moment was unthinkable. The rights hated the mere idea of an election which under the present condition of unrest assured them a heavy reverse. They solidly advised the President Alcala Zamora against a general election. Nor did Alcala Zamora, that old servant of Andalucian Junkers, think it expedient to give the country a chance to express its own mind. Thus Lerroux, the old veteran radical and close collaborator of Zamora during the first months of the Republic,

was called upon to save the Republic. To understand the republicanism of Zamora and Lerroux one needs to understand the inherent characteristics of the Spanish republic. When the monarchy fell in April 1931 Spain did not immediately become a bourgeois democratic state. Monarchy was merely the expression, the form of a particular politico-economic system, and had for its basis the army, the landed nobility, finance capital heavily bound up with land, and lastly the church. The bourgeois democratic revolution lags behind in the same measure as these tasks remain unfulfilled. To prolong the life of feudalism the march of the revolution had to be stopped. It was precisely at this moment, after the fall of the monarchy, that the interests that were the prop of the monarchy picked up Lerroux and entrusted him with the job of giving the revolution a republican burial. It is no wonder, therefore, that the CEDA did not find it detrimental to their interest to join the cabinet headed by their confidence man, Lerroux. On the contrary, it still enabled the Jesuits and Fascists to masquerade under republican colors. The masses, however, did not fail to see through the colors.

General Strike Called

On the 4th of October, that is, Thursday evening, the new cabinet was formed. With his customary modesty Gil Robles declined to accept a seat in the cabinet and claimed only three ministries for his party with which to serve his clientele, namely, the ministries of Agriculture, Labor, and in order to make these two arms doubly effective, that of Justice. On Friday morning a general strike had been called by the Alli anza Obrera, the united front organization of the working class to which the entire working population of the nation responded almost to a man. All during Friday the atmosphere became more and more tense and by Saturday it became known that workers had taken to arms in various places and were in power. In Barcelona things were moving with dramatic swiftness. Friday afternoon the nationalist petty-bourgeois government of autonomous Catalonia called the Generalidad, started arming its own militia, the Escamots, recruited from student and shopkeeping classes. One might expect that the nationalist aspirations of Catalonia which gave rise in the past to so many separatist putsches were at last going to be fulfilled--Catalonia was going to become a republic!

At 7 o'clock on Saturday, the Allianze Obrera of Catalonia, embracing the Socialists, Blockists, Communists, Trotskyites and their trade union organization, that is, all except the Syndicalists, made an imposing demonstration before the Generalidad Palace and demanded the declaration of a Catalan Republic. The contrast, as thousands of unarmed supporters of the Allianza Obrera marched by with uplifted arms, with the patronizing support of thousands of armed nationalist units, is too striking to be ignored. However, the Allianza Obrera warned the Generalidad that in the case of refusal on the part of the Generalidad they would take upon themselves the responsibility of declaring the independence of Catalonia. At 8 o'clock Senor Companys, the President of the Generalidad, declared Catalonia an independent Republic

inside a new Federal Republic and asked other parts to join the new Republic. At 10 o'clock the troops started bombarding the palace with artillery. Early on Sunday morning, the Generalidad capitulated. With its surrender the Barcelona insurrection was effectively crushed.

Two causes mainly contributed to this quick surrender of Barcelona. The first and foremost was the treachery of the petty-bourgeois nationalist party, Esquerra. The other cause, no less important, was the betrayal by the anarcho-syndicalist leaders not of the republic demanded by the Generalidad but of the proletarian revolution. The other cause, whose magnitude it is still too early to judge, was the mistakes committed by the Allianza Obrera.

Cowardly Role of Petty Bourgeoisie

It is clear Esquerra did not want to fight. Vacillation and confusion, the two historic traits of the petty bourgeoisie at moments of decisive action, showed themselves at their height. No stone was unturned to bring about as quickly as possible their own capitulation. The last word of Companys was that he surrendered "to avoid unnecessary bloodshed."

Instead of arming the workers the Esquerra leaders let loose a volley of abuse on the syndicalist leaders, even going to the extent of explaining the arming of the nationalist units as precautions against expected anarcho-syndicalist disturbances. On Friday, there was a general round-up of syndicalists charged with having held illegal meetings. The Allianza Obrera was denied arms up to the last moment, even though they had been persistently demanding arms. Instead of filling up the streets with armed civilians, the people were asked to keep indoors. A handful of soldiers was allowed to march into the plaza in front of the palace of the Generalidad with cannons drawn by mules and actually train them on the palace without any resistance whatsoever. The solid stone palace which is only approachable by narrow lanes would have been impregnable, at least for a considerable time, had anybody cared to mount a few machine guns on the palace windows and barricaded the lanes.

When, late at night, harrassed and desperate at the flat refusal of the armed nationalist forces, concentrated at different parts of the city to come to the aid of the Generalidad, the Minister of the Interior, Senor Dencas appealed to "brother Syndicalists," "brother Communists," to arms! to arms! it was already too late. Besides, by this time all the strategic positions of the city had been occupied by the troops and the battle was almost lost. According to the Catholic paper, El Debate, Esquerra had distributed 50,000 rifles alone to its followers. Even if exaggerated, much weight is lent to this figure by the recovery within a few days of 12,000 rifles, 14,000 pistols, 3,000 bombs, and an assortment of other arms from the rebels. Furthermore, when the troops occupied the Ministry of the Interior, besides a huge stock of rifles and machine guns two armoured cars were found which were never put into use. With this enormous quantity of arms and all the resources that the government of such a rich province as Catalonia had at its disposal, the Generalidad refused to fight against an army of 3,000 men, the majority, if not all of whom were Catalans who might have

easily passed over to the side of the Generalidad, had it cared to offer some resistance.

Meanwhile, in the various districts of Catalonia, workers had disarmed the Civil Guards and had hoisted the red flag side by side with the Catalan flag. This probably hastened the surrender of the Generalidad more than anything else. The workers were expected to converge on Barcelona Sunday morning. The Rabassaires, as the Catalan peasants are known and who were the backbone of the Esquerra party, were similarly expected to march into Barcelona. No insurrection can succeed when the capital capitulates. Overwhelming the enemy through action on all fronts is the key to success of all insurrections. Above all, continued action. If Barcelona had continued to fight, losing but fighting, it is more than probable that the outside districts would have come to its aid. How could they now be blamed for not marching to help persons who had already surrendered "to avoid unnecessary bloodshed?"

Anarcho-Syndicalist Treachery

The treachery of Generalidad has quite a number of parallels in history; it is not the first time that the petty bourgeoisie, pushed by circumstances into revolutionary action, have shrunk back at the decisive moment because of fear of the same revolution. But how is one to explain the cold-blooded betrayal of the working class by the anarcho-syndicalist leaders, especially in Barcelona? Though painful to read, a few quotations from the post-insurrection anarcho-syndicalist press would be instructive to show with what naiveté, crude ignorance and callous indifference this treachery is being justified. The weekly, Tierra y Libertad for example, writes in its issue of the 11th:

> "Bloody events took place in Spain from the 5th to the 7th of October as a result of protest against the formation of the new Lerroux-Gil Robles government. A section of the proletariat which did know how to discover in time that their interest lay outside the sphere of political parties, gave to the spectacle a popular varnish. In Barcelona, in the districts, in Asturia, in Madrid, etc. etc. the general strike assumed great proportions although not supported by the C. N. T., which knew that in the last analysis, it was nothing but the clash of two fascisms."

The general strike of the entire Spanish proletariat, the long drawn-out fight of the workers of Asturias and Leon which according to government communiques has caused over a thousand deaths and which includes hundreds of CNT militants, are all according to these wiseacres merely a clash of Madrid fascism with that of Barcelona. Lamenting over the loss of life the paper continues:

> "More tragic than the loss of life is the response to objectives with which the victims had little to do. Because the victims are not

> ministers, deputies, persons eager to live on the public budget, but workers deceived by their political and trade union leaders."

More than that, after ill-concealing their feeling of jubilation over the defeat of the Nationalists and also the Allianz Obrera, the anarchist daily, Solidarodad Obrera, does not hesitate to indulge in boasts such as:

> "The man on the street asks, what would have happened if instead of Esquerra and the Allianze Obrera, who are only dilletantes in the art of insurrection, the Anarchist party and the C. N. T. had proclaimed the insurrection. He himself gives the answer."

The attempts made by the anarcho-syndicalist leaders to cover their treachery with vainglorious allusions to past heroism and sacrifice will deceive nobody. Only the very credulous amongst the proletariat would still believe in the fairy tales spread by the anarcho-syndicalist press that anarcho-syndicalism is the only salvation of the working class. Indeed, once more anarcho-syndicalism has shown itself as the arch-enemy not of fascism but of the Spanish proletariat. Counter-revolutionary would not be too strong an adjective for persons to whom petty revenge on the nationalist enemies was of greater importance than the proletarian revolution.

In Retrospect

If there is any silver lining to the dark events of the recent days, it is the world of experience gained by the Allianza Obrera which played not an unimportant part in the insurrection. In spite of the fact that the C. N. T., still a potent factor in the working class movement, has consistently refused to join the united front, the power of the Allianza had continually been increasing before the insurrection. The complete success of the General Strike, especially in Catalonia where the C. N. T. was by far the strongest, only showed that it had entered the stage of independent political action.

The Allianza of Catalonia, inspite of the individual bravery of its followers made a number of mistakes which probably enabled the Esquerra to retain the absolute hegemony of the movement and consequently betray it so easily. The importance of Catalonia in the development of the revolution lay in the fact that here the revolution presented three different fronts; namely, the national, the agrarian and the proletarian. The question of national liberation and that of the destruction of feudal landlordism, the essential and unfulfilled tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution, all join hands in Catalonia with the question of overthrowing of the present unworkable economic system by the proletariat. In view of the inability of the bourgeoisie, it is only the proletariat who, in the process of carrying thru its own revolution, can solve the national and agrarian questions. The solidarity of the Catalan bourgeoisie with Madrid even in the national question only shows the importance of the national question in the broad problem

of the revolution.

Of fundamental importance is the fact that no one of these questions could be solved without the other two. This interdependence and unity of the three phases, this broad platform of revolutionary action made Barcelona the natural leader of the insurrection. It was quite correct to support, as the Allianza did, the slogan of a Catalan Republic. The great mistake of the Allianza lay in not amplifying this slogan in order to make it the slogan of the working class, to make it worth defending irrespective of what syndicalist leaders said. The task of the moment, knowing that Esquerra could do nothing but betray, was to carry on violent agitation popularising the slogan of national independence for the Catalan Republic not only amongst the followers of the Generalidad with a view to force Generalidad into declaring the Republic, but amongst the workers and peasants by making the Catalan Republic a republic of peasants and workers. This the Allianza did not do. Suffering from a sense of their own insignificance, the Allianza did not think of doing anything that might give the Generalidad a chance to back out; that is, unwittingly it became an appendage of the Generalidad.

It is still less justifiable that neither of the Communist groups in the Allianza, that is, the official Party or Maurin's Workers and Peasants Block, thought of doing this mass agitation as independent parties. But was the Allianza in Catalonia so weak as to rely entirely on the Generalidad? The grand success of the General Strike called by the Allianza in spite of the opposition of the strongest group, namely, the C. N. T., should have convinced them that the broad masses were sympathetic towards the Allianza. The fact that the police, under instruction from the Generalidad, which had its own axe to grind, had helped, to a certain extent, the success of the strike, does not minimize in any way the significance and importance of the strike, which was an answer to the fascists of Madrid and had little to do with the aspirations of the Generalidad. On the other hand, the attempt to utilize Generalidad was also not carried to its logical end. There is no reason why Allianza should not have made open agitation for arms on Saturday evening instead of patiently waiting for arms till Sunday morning. A refusal on the part of the Generalidad to give arms for the defense of the Republic would have, on the one hand, put the nationalist leaders into an embarrassing position, and, on the other, popularised the idea of armed mass resistance.

Some attempts are now being made to expatiate the Communist Party of Catalonia from the mistakes of the Allianza by arguing that the Party was there too short a time to make its position felt. It is true. But it is no argument. Nobody is to be blamed but the Communist Parties of Spain and Catalonia for the insensate ultra-left campaign carried on by their own press against the Allianza. Denunciation and abuse were showered on the Allianza in a manner which quite exceeded the Syndicalists. It was only on September 16th that the Communist Party at Madrid and a few days later the Catalonian Party realized for the first time that the Allianza Obrera was not a "fantasy", but the

only organ of struggle of the working class and that it was worthwhile to join it. The recent events have more than confirmed this correct, though belated, estimation of the Allianza Obrera. The slogan given out by the Party, "All Power to the Alliance of Workers and Peasants" a few days before the insurrection, though second hand, could not have been more opportune. To condemn the Allianza of opportunism now would be a confession of sectarian short-sightedness.

What the Allianza could not do in Catalonia has, however, been more than achieved by the Allianza in the north, in Leon, in Asturias. It is still too early to estimate exactly the leadership of the Allianza in these events. It is quite significant, however, that the section which resisted and has still been resisting Madrid so gloriously should be Asturias, the only region where the Allianza embraced all the working class organizations and parties including the C. N. T. News trickled through about the organization and discipline of the whole insurrection. Leaders of all the different groups, that is, Communists, Socialists, Syndicalists, are being found in the debris of corpses far out in the mountains or they are being mentioned as ringleaders. Indeed, there is every reason to conclude that the Allianza Obrera, the united front of the Spanish proletariat, has justified itself.

The insurrection has failed, and for this failure Barcelona may be held as mainly guilty. Catalonia happens to be the most important unit in the Spanish republic. The economic importance of Catalonia may be judged from the single fact that about 50% of the tax yield from industry and commerce accruing to the central government comes from Catalonia. In the field of agriculture, Catalonia is the principal producer of wine, one of the chief items of export. Barcelona also happens to be Spain's only big port. What is probably more important is the fact that besides its economic superiority, Barcelona has been generally the leader of all movements against Madrid--the center of feudal reaction. It was in Barcelona that the first republic was proclaimed by Macia leading to the fall of the monarchy in April 1931. It is this spiritual hegemony exercised by Barcelona that made the entire country look to Barcelona for a moral lead. It was perfectly plain to anybody who watched the march of events in those fateful days of the 5th, 6th and 7th of October that a successful stand made by the Generalidad even for a short period would not only have vitalized the uprising on a nation-wide scale but would have completely stripped the central government of all confidence--the first condition of victory. Seen from this light, the insurrection in Barcelona assumes a new meaning.

What's Ahead?

Now, whither Spain? The blood bath given to the Spanish worker is sure to keep him quiet for some time. In the meanwhile, will Gil Robles undertake another coup d'etat and thus carry out his real plans? Whether Spain will renounce the Republic and restore monarchy or evolve a new type of fascist state based on the 15,000 Monarchist army officers (whom Azana could not discharge) or, follow the model of one of those European prototypes are questions difficult to

answer. In any case, in predicting anything, one should not lose sight of the fact that in Spain there are two factors which are bound to modify profoundly the course of events following some already known model. They are: a comparatively undeveloped and consequently weak bourgeoisie and the existence side by side of an extremely revolutionary and well-organized proletariat. However, for the immediate moment, there does not seem to be any probability of the state undergoing any outward change. Spanish fascism has so far found the Republic quite a suitable means for carrying out its designs. It has already scotched a great movement from within the parliament. There is no need for an instant change. The great offensive is already on the way. The minister of Labor, a CEDA member, is making new laws allowing the employers to cancel individual as well as collective contracts with the workers. An anti-Marxist campaign amongst the workers is on foot under the patronage of Gil Robles. The Minister of Agriculture is busy hatching reform plans for the agrarian laws to ward off an agrarian movement of discontent.

No, for the time being, Republicanism is quite a convenient form of Reaction. To destroy reaction it is necessary to destroy the present Republic. One will have to look for salvation to the indomitable revolutionary will of the Spanish proletariat. (October 16, 1934)

THE COMINTERN AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST OPPOSITION.

The September 5th issue of the Communist International, the official organ of the Executive Committee of the Communist International carries an article, "The Brandlerites and their Letter to the E.C.C.I.". This article is the answer of the leaders of the Communist International to the proposal of the Communist Party of Germany (Opposition and the other sections of the International Communist Opposition to have delegates at the VIIth World Congress.

The article raises the following question: Do the political prerequisites exist for negotiations on such unity? The following answer is given.

> "As for the Brandler group, we may consider the following facts to constitute certain prerequisites for such negotiations, viz:-(a) Brandler's group has come out against the Social-Democratic and Trotzkyite estimate of the international situation and the Trotzkyite slander of the U.S.S.R. and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union; (b) the Brandler group has revised its estimate of Social-Democracy, and recognized that the defeat of the working class in Germany and Austria is the result of the Social-Democratic policy; (c) this group has recognized that the "Left" Socialist Labor Party and the Trotzkyites supply the reformists with their ideology so as to keep the workers from going over to Communism."

We shall go into the question of the alleged revision of our estimate of Social-Democracy a little later.

After calling us renegades, enemies of the Soviet Union, Social-Democrats, Social-fascists, half-Trotzkyites and full Trotzkyites for years, the E.C.C.I. must now admit that, on the question of the Soviet Union, on Social-Democracy, on Trotzkyism, in other words, on all questions which determine whether or not one is a Communist we represent views which make possible our unification with the C.I., i.e., Communist views. The E.C.C.I., therefore, recognizes that we are not renegades but Communists. It does so after having been forced to give up the ultra-left course which we opposed and which led to our expulsion. After all, one cannot brand as renegades those who, for years, have stood for the views which the C.I. has now adopted.

In order, however, to offer some excuse for having opposed us for years, the E.C.C.I. maintains that we have changed our position towards the Social Democracy; that we have "partly changed" our former position and the like. For this purpose, they dig up old standby after old standby from the time of the now deceased ultra-left course some of which have not seen the light of day for many years.

The Sixth Congress Bogeys.

The article begins with the bold statement that the past six years have "completely" confirmed the "estimates" and the tactical line of the VI World Congress. The VI World Congress, as is well known, ushered in the era of ultra-leftism, the united front "from below", that is, the rejection in practice of the united front, and a trade union policy which in practice led to the giving up of the fight for the winning of the trade unions to communism, because it was based on the idea that Communists could lead economic struggles without the support of the trade unions and without, and even against, the workers organized in trade unions. What remains today of the decisions of the VI World Congress? The last tactical turn of the C.I. on the questions of the united front and the trade unions signifies, despite all protest and denials to the contrary, a break with the tactical line initiated by the VI World Congress.

The enumeration in the article of our alleged sins which we are now supposed to be giving up creates a very shallow impression. In 1928 we said (according to the E.C.C.I), "that at the given moment nothing new was taking place which was shattering capitalist stabilization, and that on the contrary capitalism was being reconstructed and was basically more or less stable." As far as the "reconstruction" of capitalism is concerned, it was we who sharply criticized this word and what was meant by it. The theses of the VI World Congress, which the E.C.C.I. lauds, spoke of reconstruction and not we. Besides, this same view of stabilization was attributed to us at the time of our expulsion. At that time, we stated in No. 2 of "Gegen den Strom" of November 24,1928: "That stabilization is becoming more firm, no one to our knowledge has ever maintained in the Communist Party of Germany. On the contrary, the contradictions of capitalism are becoming more and more manifest." The E.C.C.I. article states that the slogan for control over production issued by us at that time "led to the strengthening of reformist illusions among the workers, created illusions that socialism could be brought about peacefully." This is just as monstrous a lie today as it was in 1928. On the other hand, it has been proven and is being proven daily that the omission of revolutionary propaganda and with it the propaganda for revolutionary transition slogans (such as control over production and Soviets) creates reformist illusions.

We supposedly denied the "necessity for an independent leadership of class struggles by the Communists". What we fought against were the already mentioned instructions of the VI Congress according to which the Communists were to assume the "independent leadership" of economic struggles without and against the trade union organizations not only against the will of the trade union bureaucracy but also without and against the workers organized in trade unions. Such a leadership of economic struggles must and did lead to a fiasco; did destroy the influence of the

Communists in the factories and unions and left the trade union burocrats free to continue their betrayals.

"The right opposition", the article continues, "denied the necessity for a most determined struggle against the "left" wing of the Social Democracy.....The right opposition .....proposed such united front tactics from above as were bound to have led to the loss of the Parties' independence."

We wish to refer to the platform of the Communist Party of Germany (Opposition) adopted at the Third National Conference of the Communist Party of Germany (Opposition) in December 1930. The acceptance of this platform is the prerequisite for membership in the C.P.G.-O. It contains the following paragraph on the role of the left wing of the Social Democracy:

"The very nature of the left wing in the Social Democracy demands the.....sharpest and clearest criticism of centrist views of the left wing, which are ideologically more dangerous than the open right wing views....."

So much on the question of the left Social Democracy. What about the united front? The basic conditions under which united fronts are to be carried out are laid down in the platform of the C.P.G.-O. as follows:

1."Complete freedom and independence of communist propaganda.
2. Complete freedom of communists to criticize united front actions."

Further:"The united front is not a firm alliance between the Communist Party and the Social Democracy..... Nor is its purpose the amalgamation of the Social Democratic and Communist organizations."

In other words, what the E.C.C.I. writes about our views are mere fabrications. We are, therefore, not in a position to give up views which we never put forth.

We have for years adhered to our present position on basic questions and which the E.C.C.I. today considers a Communist position. If our principle views in 1928 were non-Communist, then our present views are also non-Communist since there has been no change. And vice versa, if the E.C.C.I. recognizes our present views as those of Communists and not of renegades, this means the silent admission that it was an error of the Party leadership to fight us in 1928 as "renegades" and "deserters to Social Democracy".

The E.C.C.I. admits that there have been negotiations between the Communist Party (Opposition) and the C.I. in reference to united actions; admitting even the possibility of complete organizational unity, yet at the same time it maintains that the Comintern was correct in its statement that "Brandlerism is only an intermediate stage, only a bridge to Social-Democracy, to reformism", that Brandler is working for the Social Democracy, for the Wels and Severings, for the Second

International against the interests of the working class". This attempt to hide the real facts and to deny the mistakes of the Party leadership is all too obvious and will serve only to make the leadership of the C.I. ridiculous and to decrease its prestige in the eyes of the working masses.

Setting Up Strawmen.

The E.C.C.I. tries further to deny the organizational significance of the C.P.O. We have never maintained that the C.I.O. is a mass organization. It is a firm cadre organization which has created the first beginnings in the formation of illegal class trade unions on a non-partisan basis, and represents the revolutionary opposition in the American trade unions and has played a leading role in the recent mass strikes of the American workers. The E.C.C.I. article states, however, that the workers "who left with Brandler in 1928 have long since returned to the Communist Party of Germany", that in America also most of the followers of the Opposition have returned to the official Party. This is not so. As a matter of fact, in comparison with the number of Communist Party members who joined the C.P.O. the number of those C.P.O. members who returned to the Party is very much smaller.

The attempt to refer to the C.P.G.-O. and the I.C.O. as the affair of a few persons, namely Brandler, Lovestone, etc., is rather unfortunate. The C.P.G.-O. and the I.C.O. are not the affairs of individuals for personal ends but organizations which owe their origin to political circumstances and fight on the basis of political views.

The article militates especially against international negotiations with the I.C.O. The E.C.C.I. maintains that the I.C.O. is "but an unprincipled bloc of the representatives of various bourgeois and Social-Democratic tendencies". The facts, however, which the writer himself gives, namely that the I.C.O. expelled Kilboom and Hueber as well as their followers because of their violation of communist principles refute the statement that the I.C.O. is unprincipled.

The E.C.C.I. seems to regard international negotiations with the I.C.O. a menacing blow to its prestige. It proposes negotiations between the individual sections of the I.C.O. and the corresponding parties of the Comintern.

We find it much easier to discuss questions of international significance which must be solved internationally at international conferences.

However, because of our desire for the unity of the communist movement we welcome the fact that the leadership of the C.I. is preparing the first step on a principle basis in approaching the question of united actions between the Communist Party Opposition and the C.I. and its organizational re-unification in a practical manner. We were always ready to negotiate with the individual sections of the C.I. in reference to united activities and have in fact approached them several times in the past years. Our proposals to the sections of the

C.I. were, however, given no consideration whatsoever.

The conditions which the E.C.C.I. article sets for the arrangements or negotiations with the Communist Opposition, for united activity with a view to unity, are such that the value of the C.I.'s readiness on a principle base is questionable. At the first practical attempt at such negotiations, that is, during the negotiations between the Communist Party of Germany (Opposition) and the Central Committee of the C.P.G. the representatives of the C.P.G. were clever enough not to adhere to all the conditions mentioned in this article.

"To make any sort of negotiation possible", says the article, "we demand that Brandler or his 'small Buro'..... openly renounce all talk about the 'reform of the C.I.' "

The representatives of the C.P.G. did not demand this at their meeting with the C.P.G.-O. The problem of the reform of the C.I. is not just tal . And the proof lies in the fact that the C.I. leadership itself is forced to introduce a reform of its tactical methods.

The answer to the proposal made by the C.P.G.-O and the I.C.O. for practical united actions with the sections of the C.I. as given in the article is as follows:

"It (united action) can only take the form of support of the policies and activities of the C.P.G. by the Brandler group....Every attempt of the Brandler grouplets to carry out independent mass activity would be lending support to the Social Democracy.....The realization of such joint activity of the Brandler group with the C.P.G. requires neither a decision of the 7th World Congress, nor of the E.C.C.I., nor of the Cent ral Committee of the C.P.G; all that is required is an open statement by the Brandlerites that they will no longer fight the Communist Parties and that they will not follow policies which conflict with the line of the C.I. and the C.P.G."

The pre-requisite for united action of the C.P. and C.O. is that the C.O. swallow everything that the C.I.and its sections decide without the participation and knowledge of the C.O. The members of the C.O. are to be second-class members having the duties that Party membership exacts without possessing the most elementary right of Party members

The C.C. of the C.P.G. did not mention these peculiar conditions to the C.P.G.-O. and the practical united actions of the C.P.G. and the C.P.G.-O. for the purpose of united activity against fascism and the joint formation of illegal trade unions came about without these conditions. It is understood that the C.P.G.-O. during these united fronts will carry out joint resolutions in the strictest disciplined fashion.

Problem of Organic Unity.

Finally, the E.C.C.I. article sets as a condition for

organic unity that the C.O. "openly and without reservations recognize the correctness of the viewpoint of the C.I., its program, the resolutions of its congresses, its most recent decisions on the united front and on the situation in Germany, its tactics and discipline". Further, they demand among other things that we accept the resolution of April 1, 1933 on the situation in Germany. Then the article goes on to say:

"The Communist Parties cannot allow any of their members to carry on propaganda for views and opinions which differ from the decisions of their congresses and plenums and the decisions of the C.I. Freedom of groupings and factions directly contradicts the foundations of the Communist Party. Therefore, the Comintern and the Communist Parties will not allow anyone the liberty to carry on propaganda for their special views which differ from those of the Comintern".

Our comment is that:

1. The C.O. accepts the program and principle decisions of the congresses of the C.I.

2. As for the tactical decisions of the C.I. we recognize the correctness of those decisions which aim at the liquidation of the ultra-left course. We reject the demand to recognize and accept as correct those decisions which the C.I. and its sections are themselves abandoning in practise, as , for example, the resolution of the E.C.C.I. of April 1, 1933 which denies the defeat of the German working class (today admitted by the organs of the C.I.) and which approves completely the ultra-left tactics of the C.P.G. which contributed to this defeat. We will not accept the theory of social-fascism and the red trade union line which have been abandoned in practice.

3. We are ready to carry out all the decisions of the C.I. and its sections in a disciplined manner; including those resolutions which we think are incorrect provided that democratic centralism, i.e. the right of criticism of tactical questions within the framework of communist principles is restored in the ranks of the C.I.

4. We do not demand any factional or group privileges. We demand democratic centralism, inner-Party democracy for all Party members.

5. We are of the opinion that the views expressed in the C.I. article, namely, that no member of a Communist Party has the right to propagandize views which oppose the decisions of the Party and the C.I., be they tactical or principle questions, that no one has the right to defendviews which are in conflict with those of the C.I., be they tactical or principle questions, is contradictory to the spirit of democratic centralism and the letter of the C.I. statutes. This statute recognized only the duty of discipline if the member is not in agreement with the action; it provides directly for the possibility for Party members to express their disagreement with resolutions which they consider to be false. Democratic centralism requires that the members have the opportunity of actively participating in the working out

of resolutions and of checking the execution of such decisions including the right to change such decisions. Criticism, however, mus t be within the framework of Communist principles, i.e. the right to criticize all tactical questions only must be granted. This criticis m must be carried on in the organization and in the Party press, in other words, in all bodies and sections of the organization.

The problem of unity of the Communist movement depends upon the realization of democratic centralism. The article of the C.I. shows that the E.C.C.I. looks upon the return of the Communist Opposition into the C.I. as both desirable and necessary for the interests of the Communis t movement. The C.I. can establish the pre-requisite for our return, namely democratic centralism, which we demand not becaus e of any factional interests but in the interests of strengthening the C.I. so that it may fulfill its his toric task successfully.

We add, in conclusion, that the Central Committee of the C.P.G. maintains that "principle differences" still exist. (Letter of the Central Committee of the C.P.G. to Comrade Brandler in connection with the negotiations with the C.P.G.-O.) The C.I. article, on the other hand, states we have now given up our non-Communist position and now represent communist views on the basic questions. This contradiction shows how seriously one can take the arguments with which the leadership of the C.I. and of the C.P.G. in its attempt to save its face tries to obstruct the re-unification of all communists on the basis of the re-establishment of democratic centralism.

FOR A LABOR PARTY IN THE UNITED STATES.

(Draft resolution presented to Plenum of National Committee of the Communist Party U.S.A. (Opposition)). January, 1935

I. Present Economic Situation.

1. The revival in production and exchange, occasioned by the numerous artificial stimuli administered by the Roosevelt Administration, has fallen far short of the expectations of the New Dealers. The decisive indices have for months been either stagnant or going downward. The present levels continue lower than the "flush" days of summer of 1933, despite the momentary spurt recently brought on by seasonal factors and by the improvement in confidence resulting from Roosevelt's entente cordiale with Biggest Business.

2. Industrial employment and payrolls fell markedly in November. The relief rolls continue to mount. Private industrial production has not been revived in spite of billions of dollars in subsidies through the New Deal. Unemployment continues not only grave but mounting. The first year of the New Deal has proved to be a year of most rapid concentration of wealth, extension of monopoly and impoverishment of the masses. One year of the New Deal, of capitalist planning, has turned out to be a year of codified, of planned, chaos. The very machinery of the New Deal has broken down. The New Dealers, deserting the very foundations of their plans, (abandonment of price-fixing, etc.) are in full retreat.

II. Present Political Situation.

1. Outstanding among the new developments in the political life of the country is the accelerated and tremendous growth of the government bureaucracy. With the extension of government participation in and direction of ever-more phases of economic and social life of the country, state capitalism continues to develop at a terrific pace, bringing with it an ever-greater merging of the machinery of government with the machinery of big business.

2. Dissatisfaction remains widespread but vague, confused, and hesitant. In this fashion the growing feeling for something new and different manifested itself in an endorsement of Roosevelt as a symbol of those forces seeking something new and different but still safe. The discontent is still far from the level of nation-wide radicalization. Its very medium of expression, overwhelmingly within the framework of the two party system, momentarily thru the Democratic Party, is itself an index of the lack of any revolutionary upsurge in the United States.

3. The victory of the Democratic P rty was complete, particularly in a mid-term election. Adroit maneuverings by the White House, skillful and timely use of the relief funds, inept and disjointed resistance by the Republican Party as well as lack of program and orientation by the latter account much more than Democratic achievements, for the Roosevelt victory. All in all, Biggest Business today finds the Democratic Party a more suitable and fitting instrument of the times.

4.The badly defeated, the Republican Party is far from crushed. In the face of a Democratic landslide, it still managed to draw nearly 42 out of every hundred popular votes as against the Democrats' 54. Its actual strength is greater than its voting strength in the House and Senate. It is presently in a crisis, arising out of the shifts in class composition and newly developing class realignments, flowing from five years of continuous economic crisis. Momentarily, the Republican Party has been rudely shaken in the rural sections, its erstwhile tower of strength. Merely because its dominant leadership has so far stubbornly clung to the t readbare phrases of stand-patism and obstinately refused to readjust itself in the least, does not mean that the Republican Party is to be written off. It continues as the second pillar of the two-party system, still serving as the foundation of political reaction in the country.

5. Except in isolated localities, the vote of the working class parties, Communist and Socialist, was utterly insignificant. Amongst the great mass of the working class population, as well as amongst the toiling masses in the rural areas, both the Socialist and the Communist Party are of no serious consequence.

6. The social and economic consequences of the crisis are shaking the foundations of the whole American political system, the two-party system. From the classical party of state rights, the Democratic Party is being transformed into the Party of aggressive, centralized government executive power. From the Party of the "little fellow", it has become the Party of the very biggest magnates, the Party of closer collaboration with Big Business than any Republican administration ever was. The Democratic Party has become the instigator of trustification and the organizer of the monopolists. The Party of Jefferson and Jackson has become the Party of Wilson and Roosevelt -- from the Party for the preservation of Jeffersonian traditions and "democratic rights", it has become the Party brazenly and boldly demanding and hastening ever-increasing power of the executive arm of the government at the expense of the legislative and of the enhancement of the powers of the Federal Government at the expense of the States. Precisely because the Republican Party has, todate, continued its archaic approach, clinging desperately to the rather dull appeal of rugged individualism, it has lost its favored position to the Democrats. It has not yet recovered from its 1932 defeat. It continues torn by contradictory forces reflecting new political factors in their embryonic stages. Some Republican strategists try to alarm and arouse Wall Street support by blowing the old Hoover horns which were so decisively discredited in the 1932 campaign. Others, fearing the encroachment of Big Business and concentrated government executive power, try to pick up the Jeffersonian appeals, discarded by the Democratic Party, to stir the people with the feeble echoes of cries sounded more than a century ago. In both cases the Republican Party's strategy is bad and mirrors the process of confused readjustment and reorganization. However, unless some new political factor arises, the Republican Party, because of its still great popular base, will be able to come back at the expense of the inevitable failures of the Democratic Party and the unavoidable weakening of the still-flourishing Roosevelt myth.

7. The forces undermining the two-party system continue to develop. The sweeping endorsement in the last election for the Democratic Party is much more a vote going across and beyond party lines than a Democratic victory. What we now have in the Democratic Party is a momentary but monstrous hodge-podge. Recent years have witnessed a marked trend towards all important legislation being enacted by Congress thru votes based much more on bloc and economic sectional lines cutting across Party lines rather than by means of Party lines. The differences arising over legislation in Congress are becoming increasingly differences within rather than between Parties, in utter disregard of so-called traditional Party differences. These trends are a reflection of the deep-going process of changing class relations occasioned and precipitated by the economic forces let loose by the crisis. Further manifestations of the disintegrating two-party system are to be found in the mood amongst the masses expressing themselves in one direction around such figures as Bilbo and Long in the hitherto solid Democratic South, and in another direction in the "Epic" outbreak of Sinclair in California, once a rock-ribbed Republican satrapy, the victory of LaFollette's Progressive Party in Wisconsin, and in Olsen's so-called Famer-Labor Party victory over the Roosevelt-Farley machine in Minnesota.

8. Like a red thread thru the unfolding new political situation, in all its varied manifestations, runs the unbroken tendency of the government to multiply and intensify its activities as a strike-breaker.

III. Labor in the Present Situation.

1. In a political sense labor's articulate strength is today insignificant. The general staff of the biggest body of organized labor in the country, the A.F.L., is still wedded to the clap-trap of political non-partisanship, to the suicidal policy of "reward your friends and punish your enemies", to the policy of rejecting and resisting independent working class political action.

2. But amongst the workers discontent and unrest are mounting. Witness the great influx into the trade unions. Note the country-wide strike wave, the rising militancy in strike struggles, the increasing sympathy for striking workers and the rise of sympathetic and general strikes. A significant index of this growing dissatisfaction, of this first stage of radicalization, is the increasing interest in and support of independent working class political action in the form of a Labor Party. Within recent months numerous locals of the A.F. of L. have taken up this issue with system and persistency. Likewise, such powerful international unions as the United Textile Workers of America, the International Ladies Garment Workers and the Hotel and Food Workers have strongly endorsed the demand for a Labor Party.

3. The crisis has set in motion forces hastening the transformation of the whole structure of the American working class. The weakening of United States imperialism's position in the world market as a result of the international crisis and the American crisis, has served to undermine seriously the base of the labor aristocracy. Thus, the gap between the latter and the rest of the working class

has been narrowed. Skill lines and demarcations between skilled and unskilled and semi-skilled have become fainter. Even the Executive Council of the A.F.ofL. at the last convention recognized the vanishing of craft lines. On the broadlines, black and white workers alike have suffered the same misery and been subject to miserable "relief". The complete disappearance of immigration as a factor has served to weaken the division between foreign-born and native worker. The very composition of the trade union movement, the A.F.of L. has been organically altered. In short, five years of the devastating economic crisis have witnessed a marked increase in the homogeneity of the working class in the United States.

4. But regardless of what significant developments have occured in the political situation, as a result of the crisis, one factor, from labor's point of view, continues dominant and decisive to distinguish the American political situation from that prevailing in all other leading countries In the United States, the workers have yet to break with the politi cal parties of their enemy class and to organize themselves politically as a class, as a distinct mass working class party on a nation-wide basis.

IV. The Organization of a Labor Party.

1. In the sharpest contrast to the wave of militant strikes is the absence of a mass political party of the working class which can mobilize millions of workers. In fact, the United States is the one highly developed country under capitalist democracy in which the great bulk of the working class is not yet politically independent. The mass of workers has yet to learn that their economic struggles must be supported by political struggle, if the fruits of even the most victorious economic conflict are not to be lost thru some government measure (injunction, use of troops, appointment of Study Commissions). This has been the experience of labor time and again primarily because many workers who fight the employers on the economic field (trade unions) support the bosses on the political field (Democratic and Republican Parties) on a national, state-wide and municipal basis No real improvement of their immediate conditions is possible for the workers, and, still more, no abolition of the whole capitalist system and exploitation and oppression is conceivable while the workers continue so unorganized and even fighting against each other on the political field.

2. A vital next step in developing the class consciousness and defending the class interests of the proletariat is the establishment of a mass Labor Party of the workers who (in alliance with the impoverished farmers) will wage the immediate struggle against the Republican and Democratic Parties. Such a Party will unite, regardless of individual differences, all existing workers' organizations, trade unions, workers' political parties and groups, cooperatives and workers' fraternal organizations around the issue of independent working class political action. Such a Labor Party will be based not on individual membership but on organizations of labor, primarily the trade unions as its basic units -- membership by organization and bloc. The formation of a Labor Party will signify for the workers thus affiliated thru their respective organizations the beginning of their political emancipation, historically speaking the next big progressive step. Politically it would mean

the declaration of independence by the American working class from the big parties of capital.

3. No worker can or should (and least of all the Communist worker) demand that the Labor Party should be a revolutionary party or even a party radical enough to accept Communist leadership. It is not at all improbable that at the outset there may be "at the head of the Labor Party reformist Labor traitors, similar to those in England, or even worse. Nevertheless, the formation of such a party may, for a time, represent a definite step forward in the American labor movement and the Communist Party (the Communist movement) is obliged to participate in this party, if only the latter permit, in a sufficient degree, freedom of criticism and agitation by the affiliated organizations." (E.C.C.I. Resolution - 1925).

4. The Labor Party is not a party of the most advanced and conscious militants in the working class. Therefore, the Labor Party cannot be the organization that will seize and hold political power or bring final victory to the working class. This is the historic task of the Communist Party. The Labor Party can and must be made to serve as an organization for advancing, in the largest measure possible, the immediate interests and the elementary political consciousness of the working class and thus check the political aggressiveness of the bourgeoisie.

5. One cannot underscore too heavily the distinction between a Third party and a genuine Labor Party. In the specific, concrete, American situation a Third Party would be a third capitalist party, expressing the interests of the petty-bourgeoisie and serving as an instrument in the hands of the lower middle class against the higher and bigger capitalists. Such a capitalist, third, party would substantially be committed, like the Republican and Democratic Parties, to the maintenance and perpetuation of capitalism as a system. Only, it would seek to achieve this thru defending the interests of another section (the smaller) of the owning class. As such, a Third Party represents a class having interests fundamentally different from those of the working class, and would be a party of different class composition and leadership from that of a Labor Party. To the extent that Third Party forces worm their way into a Labor Party movement, they hinder its development into a distinct Party of the proletariat breaking politically with the capitalist class, with the capitalist system.

V. Historical Basis of a Labor Party in the United States.

Why does the development towards a mass party of the workers in the United States take the form of a Labor Party? Why a Labor Party based on the trade unions, on collective membership, in the United States and Social-Democratic Parties based on individual memberships in other countries? The answer to these questions is to be found in the historical development of the working classes in the various countries. In those countries where the organization of the trade unions preceded the organized mass political expression of the working class, (England, Belgium, United States, etc.), there, the Labor Party type developed. On the other hand, in those countries where they had the Social-Democratic type of Party, (Russia, France, Germany, etc), we find that there the trade union organization came afterward and was organized by the mass political

organization of the workers.

2. What is the basis of these variations of working class development? In certain countries (England, Belgium, United States, etc.) industrial monopolist, or imperialist, development split the working class, at an early date, into two parts - into an aristocratic group of better paid and the rest, the vast majority of unskilled, semi-skilled, underpaid and unorganized. In these countries the trade unions were formed first and the political parties much later. The labor aristocracy, split apart from the rest of the working class, found that it could satisfy its demands thru a limited form of organization, like a craft union. The labor aristocracy developed a bourgeois ideology and in part, for a time, even its material interests coincided with those of the bourgeoisie The great majority of the working class, the real proletariat, thus deprived of the better organized and more educated workers, was, at first, unable to organize itself even on a limited trade union scale let alone on the broad, all-inclusive, general class or political scale.

3. Why has a Labor Party not yet developed in this country? In the United States the split in the working class was intensified by the reinforcement of the division between skilled and unskilled by the division into native and foreign born. The bourgeois ideology and bourgeois political organization in working class ranks was also historically intensified by the prolonged period of relative economic opportunity, the lack of class fixity, and the consequent bourgeois-mindedness of the working class. These and similar historical peculiarities explain the fact that the American working class has not yet even reached the stage of a labor party as have the workers of England and Belgium.

4. However, once the labor aristocracy felt its privileges being undermined, hundreds of thousands of unskilled and semi-skilled workers poured into the unions, which but yesterday were primarily the organizations of skilled, aristocratic workers. With the sharpened attacks of the capitalists and their government on these privileges and on the very trade union organizations themselves (thru court decisions, etc.) came the first steps towards political organization -- a working class political party based on the trade unions , a Labor Party. This was the historical process in Great Britain and this has been the historical process slowly unfolding itself and still very far from completed in the United States.

VI. Basic Factors for a Labor Party

1. The slogan for a Labor Party is fully in line with the present stage of development of class-consciousness in the American labor movement. It appeals particularly to the hundreds of thousands of militants and progressives in the trade unions who are ready to band themselves against capitalism as a social system but still find the Communist and Socialist parties too radical, too sectarian, and numerically insignificant.

2. Given the present low stage of class-consciousness in the United States, the Labor Party slogan is the only one that will appeal to the whole working class, regardless of where its particular sections stood but yesterday or still stand today politically. It makes the broadest appeal against the so-called, non-partisan politics

politics of the reactionary burocracy in the unions.

3. The very marked growth of a powerfully centralized government in the United States, with its vast burocracy extending its hands daily into more walks of life, itself tends increasingly to lend a political character to the every day struggles of the workers. More and more the government is intervening against the workers in their struggles for decent conditions, better pay and the right to organize. Particularly, under the N.R.A. does the government play an ever-greater and more diversified role as a strike breaker. The objective logic of this whole trend is a condition in which the workers are more and more compelled to react against the government, to resist its measures, to react and act politically. Here is a basic factor for a Labor Party.

4. The very growing homogeneity of the American working class is also a primary factor for a Labor Party movement. The narrowed base of the labor aristocracy, the reduced gap between the skilled and the unskilled, the softening of the differences between the foreign and native-born due to the end of immigration, are among the forces making for a more unified working class; that is, for the proletariat being able to act more unitedly and more on a general class basis, on a national mass political basis.

5. The Labor Party question assumes special timeliness and interest for the greatest mass of workers in the face of certain features of the New Deal in its larger aspects. Under the guise of "impartiality"and "social interests" the New Dealers are working up step by step a technique for government ownership of the unions, in reality for corporate or Fascist unions, for sapping the very life-blood of the trade unions, as genuine labor organizations -- all ostensibly in behalf of a so-called larger or more social interest! Besides, Roosevelt's much over-advertised program of social legislation will only become an obstacle to genuine social legislation and a source of s till more and greater burdens imposed on the workers, unless they organize themselves politically as a class in defense of their own interests.

6. The developing fighting mood among the workers has given rise in recent months to a great expansion of the A.F. of L. to a vas t influx of masses, about 2 millions, mainly unskilled and semi-skilled, into the trade unions. In this influx of masses we find not only a great force for the reorganization of the craft unions into industrial unions, for setting up a new structural form for the whole A.F.of L. but also for the bona fide unions, sooner rather than later, serving as the basis for a Labor Party movement. Hence, the Labor Party issue is today more timely than it has been in at least ten years.

VII. Our Objectives and Strategy in the Labor Party Campaign.

1. The Communists, as the vanguard of the proletariat, must not only be able to point out clearly the objective basis of this trend towards a Labor Party in the United States. We must also be able to stimulate this historically progressive trend in a country which has relatively the most politically backward working class in the world.

2. "Why must the Communists act thus? Because it is their task to remain in closest contact with the masses in order to influence the latter continually in a revolutionary sense. However, mere agitation and propaganda, even the best, is not sufficient for revolutionary influence on the masses. For this purpose the masses require their own revolutionary experience. They can obtain essential elements of this experience in the Labor Party, even tho the latter be directed by reformists. In that case the masses, after their disappointments, will learn to know the treasonable role of the petty-bourgeois reformists, and that is very important. Furthermore, they will gain valuable experience in the independent political organizations of the working class". (E.C.C.I. resolution - 1925).

3. Our agitation for a Labor Party is not something abstract based merely on our analysis, but is to be tied up with the every day immediate interests of the workers, particularly the burning need for social insurance, the right to organize, the menace of company unions, etc. It is on this basis that the Labor Party movement will serve as a most effective weapon for breaking down the prejudices against independent working class political action spread among the working masses thru generations by the capitalists. It is in this sense that the Labor Party will serve as a further entering wedge into great masses of workers whom we have not been able to reach directly thru their immediate struggles or who are not yet approachable with the direct Communist appeal.

4. Every bona fide trade union and labor organization, regardless of color or nativity of its membership, so long as it is opposed to the capitalist class political parties (Democratic and Republican) should be affiliated to the Labor Party and be part of the Labor bloc participating under one banner in the election campaigns. Every such affiliated body maintains its own distinct organization as part of the federated Labor Party and has the right to engage in constructive criticism as well as exercise full freedom for propagating its own principles. Inside the Labor Party every organization (Communist, Socialist, trade union) has a right to try to have its members nominated as standard-bearers on the Labor Party ticket in the elections.

5. Thru our model constructive activity among the labor party organization and members, we Communists should be able not only to draw the more militant and advanced workers into our ranks but should also be able to help move the whole organization leftward. In both fashions we will be thus laying a better basis for a healthy, united, mass Communist Party in the United States.

6. We should not connect the Labor Party with any aims achievable only by a Communist Party; such as the Proletarian Dictatorship, Soviet Power, etc. At the same time we must conduct, constructively, campaigns inside the Labor Party for more leftward demands, attuned, of course, to the need of maintaining the broadest organizational base for the Labor Party. Given such broad unity of action thru a Labor Party, we have here an engine of effective mass struggle against Fascism, War, and capitalist reaction in general.

VIII. CONCLUSION

1. The Communist Party (Opposition) should thru propaganda, agitation and thru its influence in the trade unions do everything in its power to stimulate and hasten the historical process of a Labor Party development in the United States. In our doing this, we are hastening the transformation of the workers from pawns of the two big bourgeois political parties into conscious forces moving and fighting in their own behalf.

2. While recognizing the great likelihood that a Labor Party would, at the outset, have a confused program, lacking clarity in its policies, inadequate from the proletarian revolutionary viewpoint, it would still mark a distinct forward step for the American working class.

3. The development of a mass Communist movement rooted in the soil of the country is in very large measure bound up with the development of a genuine mass Labor Party movement. Thru constructive activities, thru systematic, Marxist-Leninist education, the C.P.O. can, today as a banner bearer in the fight for a Labor Party or tomorrow thru the unified Communist Party being part of an existing Labor Party, tremendously enhance its mass influence and help insure a mass base for a Communist Party, the foundation for a proletarian dictatorship and a socialist society in the United States.

CRITICAL POINTS IN THE UNITED FRONT IN FRANCE

1. Social-Democratic Attacks

The vagueness and inadequacies of the pact against Fascism which characterized it at its very outset, and to which we called attention to at the time so that they might be eliminated, are now being utilized by the Socialist Party to cover up vicious attacks against the continued existence of the united front.

What do these weaknesses consist of?

First of all, the Communist Party of France agreed to fight for the defense of "democratic freedom" as such instead of declaring at the outset that it would fight only for the defense of the democratic rights of the workers--in other words, that it would not fight for the defense of bourgeois democracy which, as is well-known, also includes the democratic rights of the capitalist class. As a matter of fact, the latter forms the chief content of bourgeois democracy. If the Socialist Party insisted that bourgeois democracy including the rights, i.e., the class privileges of the bourgeoisie, must be defended, the Communist Party should have seen to it that this question was discussed with the mass of S. P. workers. The leaders of the S. P., should they have openly fought for the privileges of the owning class, would not have fared as well.

Secondly, the C. P. agreed to a non-aggression pact which not only forbade communist criticism of the united front but also the presentation of communist principles at joint meetings and demonstrations.

Thirdly, the C. P. agreed to exclude the question of the strike as a political means of struggle. Moreover, there was no agreement which would have instructed both parties to work together in the trade unions and utilize the strike as a weapon for certain political ends.

Fourthly, an organizational error. The united front was formed on the basis of cartels--anti-fascist cartels --composed of members of both parties. This was the correct procedure at the beginning but it has not advanced to a higher form and is, therefore, approaching a critical stage. The next step should have been the extension of the anti-Fascist party cartels by drawing the trade unions as organizations into the united front and further by enlarging the anti-fascist cartels into united front organs which base themselves on the broad masses of workers, reaching farther than the Party and the unions.

These incipient weaknesses have not been overcome in the course of events; on the contrary, they have become more intensified and are threatening to become an obstacle to the united front. It is not too late to remedy the situation, but it may be too late very soon. It is to the interest of the working class to point out frankly these weaknesses and how to overcome them. By doing this, we are not revealing any secrets to our class enemy, because he knows them and is taking advantage of them. Only when the proletarian masses are clearly confronted with the problems can they find the means for solving them.

The Socialist Party has utilized these weaknesses--even to the extent of open attacks on the united front.

In the Chamber of Deputies the Socialist delegate from Lower Alsace, Georges Weill, demanded that the C. P. give up its "ridiculous" slogan of self-determination for Alsace-Lorraine and accept the slogan of "national defense". The Party district of Lower Alsace under the influence of Weill has passed a resolution which makes these two demands the conditions for the united front in France and Alsace.

The S. P. leader Leon Blum demands the right of agitation and freedom of organization for the Russian Mensheviks in the Soviet Union.

Shortly after the dissolution of the Doumergue cabinet the S. P. committee (including the left wing) agreed unanimously to support fully a bourgeois government which would fight fascism and the economic crisis. Following the formation of the Flandin regime Leon Blum explained the resolution in "Populaire" saying that the S. P. was willing to participate in a bourgeois government fighting fascism and the economic crisis. Need we add that the readiness to participate in a bourgeois coalition government or even its toleration means in fact the readiness to smash the proletarian united front?

Unfortunately, the C. P. has not made a single criticism of this in public--a dangerous error because criticism on the part of the C. P. is the only means to prevent this danger.

The Defense of Democratic Freedom and the Struggle for the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

Whether or not the demand for the defense of the democratic rights of the workers or the defense of democratic rights in general should form the content of a united front slogan deserves serious consideration. The "defense of democratic rights" is nothing but the defense of bourgeois democracy in the concrete case of the parliamentary republic. This is the viewpoint of Social Democracy and thus it is understood by the masses, if the Communists fail to clarify the question of bourgeois democracy and proletarian dictatorship.

We must admit, however, that the Communists themselves have become confused and are deviating on the question of bourgeois democracy.

How else explain the fact that the Communist Party of France, through its secretary Thorez, drew up an official program of bourgeois-democratic reforms, which listed as its main points: proportional representation, woman's suffrage and municipal self-government, in opposition to Doumergue's constitutional reforms?

Ercoli writes in the "Humanite" of November 15th:

> "In order to stop fascism we are prepared to fight together with Socialist workers and their organizations for the defense of democratic rights, especially the rights of the working class; we hope that no one misunderstands the value which we place on the defense of democratic rights. We fight for the defense of democratic rights because this struggle enables the working class to organize and group its

"....forces for a higher struggle, namely the struggle for power, for the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

"The establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat remains our aim even when we are fighting for the defense of democratic rights.

"There is, therefore, no contradiction between our actions in the capitalist countries for the defense and extension of democratic rights and our position in the Soviet Union which consists of defending at all costs the system and the organizational principles of the dictatorship of the proletariat."

Confusion in Essentials

This is harmful and dangerous confusion because there is a contradiction between the defense of "democratic rights" in capitalist countries and the proletarian dictatorship in the Soviet Union, and that is, the contradiction between the defense and position of bourgeois democracy and the proletarian dictatorship. However, there is no contradiction between the slogan of the defense of the democratic rights of workers in capitalist countries on the one hand, and the defense of the proletarian dictatorship in the Soviet Union and the struggle for it, on the other.

The defense of the democratic rights of the workers can be only a stage in the struggle for the proletarian dictatorship. And then only under one condition, namely, that the Communists propagandize at the same time for the proletarian dictatorship and soviets and that they prepare organizationally the transition to soviets through the formation of united front organs as mass organs of the working class. On the other hand, the defense of democratic rights in general is not a stage in the struggle for the proletarian dictatorship because it excludes the propaganda for a proletarian dictatorship and its organizational preparation among the masses. The subjective guarantee which Ercoli gives and which holds true for the other Communists, that they have not given up their goal--the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship--while fighting for bourgeois democracy is sincere but meaningless. The fact that Communists adhere to their aim of establishing a proletarian dictatorship while fighting for the defense of bourgeois democracy is unimportant. The important thing for them is to convince the masses outside the Communist Party who are fighting for the democratic rights of the workers, i. e., for their own rights, to fight for the proletarian dictatorship and Soviets.

Concretely speaking: how is the agitation for a bourgeois-democratic reformist program, the demand for proportional representation, for women s suffrage, for municipal self-government to be linked up with the propaganda for Soviets and the proletarian dictatorship and for its organizational preparation. The activities of the Communist Party of France show that this is not taking place. This is a dangerous opportunistic deviation which is advantageous only to the right Social-Democratic leaders. It demands at

one and the same time the dissolution and disarming of the fascist leagues without realizing that this is in contradiction to the slogan of the defense of democratic rights.

What is the Communist Position?

The Communist position was clearly laid down by Lenin in 1917 during the counter-revolution. Though the Bolsheviks fought against Kornilow together with Kerensky, Lenin protested vigorously against this united front being called in defense of bourgeois democracy or the Kerensky regime. Have these elementary Communist lessons been forgotten? It is, indeed, high time to recall them.

Let us consider the concrete conditions of the class struggle in France today.

The struggle is directed against those forces which aim at the establishment of a fascist dictatorship and those bourgeois groups which directly or indirectly support this. The French bourgeoisie want to do away with bourgeois democracy; they do not want to maintain or extend it. The economic situation, the duration and sharpening of the economic crisis, force it to reduce the concessions made to the working class and to the petty bourgeoisie which, in all capitalist countries, form the real basis for the functioning of bourgeois democracy. The bourgeoisie aim at the elimination of the democratic rights of the workers and of democratic rights in general in order to strengthen bourgeois executive power as a tool for increased exploitation. So much for the bourgeoisie.

Among the masses of the workers the parliamentary republic already stands discredited. What good is a banal reform of the republic here? For the bourgeoisie it is too much, for the working class too little. The way to fight against a fascist dictatorship is not through the reform of the republic.

Even the left wing of the Socialist Party seems to realize this. Pivert writes in "Populaire" of November 20th:

> "There can be no serious anti-Fascist defense without the general slogan: All power to the workers."

Being a left Socialist, he does not know how to work out this slogan as it should be worked out and instead links it up with the other demand for a joint program for the struggle against the economic crisis by taking the "plan" of the C. G. T. as a basis (with the necessary "correction"): a plan which is a hodge-podge of old, bankrupt economic democratic illusions and semi-fascist slogans, and could very well serve as a bridge to fascism.

Whose job is it if not the Communists' to take the initiative, to lead, to give the correct political and organizational slogans corresponding to the objective conditions?

The demand of Pivert is of significance. It shows that a section of Socialist workers is already aware of the fact that the fight against fascism cannot be purely defensive, that it calls for a transition to the offensive, i.e., a goal which goes beyond bourgeois democracy and the capitalist economic order.

The slogan: "All Power to the Workers", however, is not adequate. It is too ambiguous and too narrow at the

same time. Too ambiguous because the concrete form of proletarian power, the Soviets, are left out; too narrow because it only includes the working class. In France there can be no seizure of power without the great masses of petty and middle peasants. Workers and Peasants Soviet then. The soldier is only a peasant in uniform. Hence, the complete slogan which must be opposed to the fascist dictatorship is: Workers', Peasants and Soldiers' Soviet.

We, Communists, know full well, that Soviets cannot be formed at will at any moment. The prerequisite for their formation is a broad, revolutionary mass movement which is ready for an insurrection.

Soviets, at first, function as organs of the armed uprising before they become the organs of power of the proletarian state. A successful uprising which embraces all classes of workers is not possible without the Soviets acting as the organs of the uprising.

The slogan for Soviets must be spread among the masses as an agitational slogan before it can become a slogan for immediate action.

But, it will be asked, can Social-Democratic organizations be expected to accept the slogans for Soviets? Can it become a united front slogan?

Why not?

The existence of Soviets is, to be sure, a necessary prerequisite for the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship; but they in themselves do not represent the proletarian dictatorship. To establish the latter it is further necessary that the Communist Party have the majority in the Soviets, so that the majority of the Soviets are ready to take over all the power.

Soviets, with the Social Democrats in the majority, existed in Russia until the summer of 1917 and in 1918-1920 in Austria and Germany. Within the Soviets it is possible to discuss the questions of bourgeois democracy and the proletarian dictatorship before the broadest masses. The Bolsheviks, as is well known, repeatedly asked the Mensheviks to seize power as long as they (the Mensheviks) had the majority in the Soviets.

The slogan for Soviets and the seizure of power by the majority in the Soviets effectively counteracts the tendency of the right wing of the Social Democracy to split the united front in favor of a bourgeois government which pretends to fight against fascism.

The Soviets are the greatest possible extensions of the proletarian united front.

In order to take this step this question must be taken up with Socialist and Communist workers, with the entire working class.

But the "non-aggression pact" prevents such discussion.

The French S. P., on the other hand, has already introduced the discussion on basic questions by publicly posing the question of "organic unity", i.e., the re-establishment of a united party of the working class. From the Socialist point of view the real obstacle to organic unity is the Communist Party's belief in Communist principles, particularly in the dictatorship of the proletariat. The fundamental debate on bourgeois democracy and proletarian dictatorship has, therefore, been brought in by the Socialists in this indirect manner.

In "Populaire" of November 20th Leon Blum directly links up his discussion with the question of the Mensheviks demanding that they be given freedom to agitate and organize in the Soviet Union and "equal representation" at the conferences of the two Internationals.

"United action between the Communist Party and us", writes Leon Blum, "has been sufficiently cemented so that we have nothing to lose by discussing this question. We can express our thoughts openly, without fear unlike heretofore. On the contrary, by formulating and clarifying the practical difficulties and the fundamental differences, which separate both parties, we are preparing the transition from national to international pacts and from united action to organic unity."

It is not exactly flattering to the Communist Party that the Socialists in France are taking the initiative of starting discussions on fundamental questions before the mass of workers. Their purpose in doing this is certainly not the same as would motivate the Communist Party. However, the purpose does not matter. At any rate, this procedure of the Socialist Party shows that the Communist Party has every possibility of discussing fundamental problems and practical problems resulting therefrom in public. It is absolutely necessary that these possibilities be exhausted in order to further the united front, in order to intensify and broaden it. The extension and intensification of the united front is necessary for its very existence.

In order to conduct a discussion among the masses in the Communist sense a necessary condition within the Communist Party itself must be fulfilled, namely that the clarification of these questions be taken up by the entire Party membership. This involves, of course, inner-party democracy.

There need be no fear that this discussion will interfere with outside Party activities. The facts show the contrary to be true. The Party is hindered in its outside activity because the questions concerning the united front have not been sufficiently clarified within its own ranks.

How else can one explain the hesitating attitude on the part of the Communist Party to discuss these fundamental questions with the Socialist workers?

If the slogan "Loss of Time" ever meant anything, it does in this case. That the Socialists were permitted to take the initiative is not exactly satisfactory. Now it is a question of making up for lost time, of doing away with the errors that marked the beginning, to eliminate vagueness and ambiguity and to overcome the dangers which threaten to dissolve the united front by raising united actions to a higher level. This can only be done when the Communist Party fully realizes and carries out its specific task in the united front.

"National" or "Republican" Defense?

Georges Weill, Socialist delegate of Lower Alsace, answered the Communist speaker Thorez in the French Chamber of

Deputies during the discussion on the budget of Alsace-Lorraine that:

> "Whether national defense or French politics concerns us, it is absolutely necessary for the C. P. to drop its ridiculous demands if unity of action is to be maintained in Alsace."

(He was referring to the Communist demand of national self-determination for Alsace-Lorraine and the rejection of national defense). The Communist delegate replied: "That is not so. The French workers will not accept national defense and will, therefore, make no such demands upon the Communist Party."

This action on the part of Georges Weill was not an accident; a few days later the Socialist district of Lower Alsace, controlled by him sent the following resolution to the coming Party Congress of the S. F. I. O.

".....in view of the significance of this problem and especially in view of the present international situation, the Conference goes on record as entering into alliance only with those parties which recognize

a. the principle of republican defense

b. the principle and the fact that since 1918 Alsace-Lorraine represents a part of the French republic."

Two characteristic changes are noticeable here as compared with the speech of Georges Weill in the Chamber of Deputies. First of all, the change from "national" to "republican" defense. This change obviously aims to win over the French working class to the support of a French imperialist war on the grounds that this war would be waged to "defend the republic" against fascism. Secondly, the conditions for maintaining the united front in Alsace-Lorraine are extended to cover all of France.

Weill belongs to the right wing of the Socialist Party, the leader of which is Frossard. This is nothing but a systematic attempt on the part of the right wing of the S.P. to discontinue the united front.

It was entirely correct for the Communist speaker to say that the Communist Party of France now as always is opposed to imperialist war and rejects national or republican defense. However, it is not sufficient merely to repeat these old slogans. It is necessary to state that the problem of "national defense" has assumed a new form as a result of two factors.

The New Situation

First, the rise of fascism in Germany. This serves as an excuse for French imperialism to enlist the working class in an imperialist war under the banner of the defense of the "republic" or of "democracy" against fascism. The second new factor to be considered is the fact that in a future imperialist war there is the possibility of a military alliance of Soviet Russia with French imperialism against Hitler Germany.

We emphasize that it will be a military alliance because a political war alliance presupposes identical, or at least not conflicting, interests. These two states, however, have not the same ends in view. French imperialism pursues imperialist war aims, though temporarily allied with Soviet Russia, in order to ward off an attack on the part of

Hitler Germany. On the other hand, the social structure of the Soviet Union makes imperialist war aims impossible. The Soviet Union in the case of defending itself from an attack of Hitler Germany will be engaged in a revolutionary war.

This is a new factor which must be reckoned with: a factor which was unheard of in 1914 because then there existed no proletarian state as yet. Though Lenin in 1917/18 thought of the possibility of a military alliance with England and France against imperial Germany in case of German attacks, this was never carried out in practice because England and France preferred to ally themselves with the counter-revolution. Today, however, the question is more real since the Soviet Union is a member of the League of Nations and the common enemy has caused a rapprochement in the foreign policy of Soviet Russia and Imperialist France.

What position would the French proletariat take in the case of a war between the Soviet Union and France?

It is obvious that this question demands a concrete answer and that this question must be clarified by the Communist Party for the entire working class of France. The answer is basically unchanged but assumes a new, concrete form.

The decisive communist slogan to date has been: Transform Imperialist War into Civil War.

In the above mentioned situation the French working class must approach the task of revolutionary opposition to its own bourgeoisie, realizing the necessity of waging a revolutionary war side by side with the Soviet Union. The Communist Party of France as the leading force would have to aim at the revolutionary overthrow of bourgeois state power and the seizure of power by the working class. It must declare war on its own bourgeoisie and organize the revolutionary struggle against it before such a war and from the very first day that war breaks out. No imperialist government can give the Soviet Union military support consistently and with all its national forces. The Soviet Union must constantly fear sabotage and treason on the part of the imperialist Powers and even face the possibility of a compromise between the imperialist state (France) and Hitler or the bourgeois government which would succeed Hitler in case of defeat. Moreover, the Soviet Union must count on the attacks of imperialist France on the proletarian revolution in Germany and the attempt to divide Germany in the interests of French imperialism.

The French working class alone, snatching the power from the bourgeoisie, can assure reliable support of the Soviet Union and can possibly lend military support to the proletarian revolution in Germany.

The necessity for clarifying this question becomes obvious when one tries to imagine the methods which the French bourgeoisie would use in the case of a military alliance with Soviet Russia. The extreme right wing down to the Social Democracy would hail the war with the bourgeoisie in the lead as a "revolutionary war". The revolutionary wars of 1792 would be cited by falsifying their meaning.

When, therefore, the Social Democracy is today broaching the question of "republican" or "national" defense, the Communists must seize the opportunity to clarify both for

themselves and the working classes the present meaning of their position.

This problem is not confined to the French working class alone. It is just as much a problem for the workers of "democratic" and fascist countries.

On this point the ways of the Communists and Socialists part. There can be no unity on this question between the Socialist and Communist parties. Since, however, the Socialists are already broachin the question publicly, it is the duty of the Communists to do likewise. If the propaganda of the Socialists for "national" or "republican" defense does not violate the united front agreements, then, certainly the propaganda of the Communists for the re-establishment of the unity of the working class and for the alliance of the working class with the petty bourgeois classes against the bourgeois classes, for the defense of the Soviet Union, for the transformation of imperialist war into revolutionary war doesn't.